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to discern the worthy poor, whom the last necessity has driven to appeal to public charity, and who therefore need, and should have, immediate relief? Mr. Robert Treat Paine, whose life and fortune have been given to the study and practice of the best methods of charity, calls this the question of the hour: "To evolve a law or test by which the worthy and needy poor may be distinguished from the willing pauper," the pauper by profession. Perhaps the surest test would be by elimination; starving the pauper out. But such a test, besides being cruel to those who do not deserve starvation, can never be depended on so long as free lunch counters exist, and indolent self-indulgence chooses to bring immunity from the pain of sympathy at the price of a glass of beer. Some other method than starvation must therefore be sought. May it be found speedily.

LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON.

## V.

### THOSE QUEER WORDS.

IN your June number, "Notes and Comments," Mr. E. M. Day, on the word "brottus," says its use was limited to the city of Savannah. This is a mistake. I remember well the word was in common use in Charleston and all the low country of South Carolina. I always entertained the opinion that it was a corruption of "gratis," conveying as it does the same meaning.

Mr. D. also mentions the words "buccra" and "goober" as of unknown etymology. I suggest "buccra" is from the Spanish "vaquero," a cowherder, and by the common people pronounced "buck-a-ro." "Goober" is probably from the Italian "gobba," a hunchback, and applied to the ground nut from its peculiar shape.

There is no obscure word that I ever heard of which survived from African sources.

S. HEYDENFELDT.

## VI.

### A GOOD PLACE TO BEGIN REFORM.

EITHER the veto power is a kingly prerogative, such as ought not to exist in a republic like ours, or else it is grossly misunderstood and criminally abused. There have been presidents, governors and mayors who have used it as if they supposed their personal interests and preferences to be the highest consideration in all legislation. Again, it has been used as an important factor in political plots, like Buchanan's veto of the Homestead bill; and, again, some executives have conceived the idea, in apparent innocence, that they ought to veto all measures for which they would not have voted had they been members of the legislative body. There have been few presidents and governors that have not been quick to resent anything that looked like an encroachment of the legislative upon the executive domain; yet great numbers of vetoes are essentially encroachments upon the province of the legislature, which cannot be resented unless the majority in favor of the vetoed measure happens to be two-thirds. It seems never to occur to the minority that in welcoming the assistance of an arbitrary power, arbitrarily used, they are lowering their own dignity and abrogating their own rights, collectively, as representatives of the people, and that it would be infinitely better, in case of an improper veto, for them to sacrifice their immediate advantage by voting with the majority to make the necessary two-thirds. There are circumstances in which one should "stand by his order." The only proper occasion for a veto is when the

measure contravenes a provision of the constitution, or when the executive has information not accessible to the legislative body, or when some occurrence after the passage of the bill renders it probable that the legislature would no longer consider it favorably, as, for instance, if General Sheridan had died after Congress passed the bill reviving the grade of general, and before the bill could be signed and the commission issued. It was to cover such contingencies, and to protect the constitution from infringement, that the veto power was instituted; and it could not have been anticipated that any executive would assume to know more of the merits of each particular measure than the committees that had carefully sifted the evidence and spent days or weeks in considering the arguments. Such an assumption is a piece of effrontery that can never be too strongly rebuked, without reference to the intrinsic character of the measure under consideration. When our government was organized, it was supposed that the presidents could be chosen in a non-partisan manner; hence the machinery of the electoral college. With a non-partisan president, the provision that a veto can only be overridden by a two-thirds majority has some reason, since it may serve to check extreme partisan legislation. But that part of the Federal apparatus has not worked as was expected, and our presidents are generally our strongest partisans. The absurdity now of giving to the individual executive a legislative power equal to two-thirds of that possessed by the two houses of the legislature, is so glaring as not to admit of the slightest debate. The remedy appears to me to be simple. The executive should certainly have the privilege of returning a bill with his objections; but if it is again passed by any majority at all—or, at the least, if by the same majority as before—it should become a law in spite of the veto. If the objections thus formally presented fail to convince enough of the legislators to turn a minority into a majority, it is fair to assume that the objections are not sound. Meanwhile, until such constitutional amendment can be made, if legislators were wise and patriotic they would vote to override every arbitrary veto, no matter on which side of the question they stood when the measure was passed.

ROSSITER JOHNSON.

## VII.

### PERIODICAL LITERATURE IN CANADA.

THE day when the question could be asked with some semblance of sense—who reads an American book?—has long since passed; but if you will substitute Canadian for American you may still have your fling at New World contributions to the library table. The literary barrenness of Canada was commented upon in the *Critic* about a year ago, and the writer of the article attributed it chiefly to the lack of true national life and sentiment. More recently a writer in one of the leading Canadian journals ventured another explanation, to wit, the absence of a first-class Canadian magazine. According to him a good magazine would develop a distinctively Canadian literature, in which the long awaited national novel would take a foremost place, and the reproach of Canada be removed.

Assuming for the sake of argument that the latter theory comes nearer the truth than the former, we are brought at once face to face with the question—why is there no first-class magazine published within the borders of the Dominion of Canada? Were one disposed to quibble a bit over this question, an easy way to begin would be by arguing that Canada was not yet big enough to have a magazine of her own, for she can count but five millions of people, whereas her sister nation to the south had at least six times that many before she could boast a maga-